

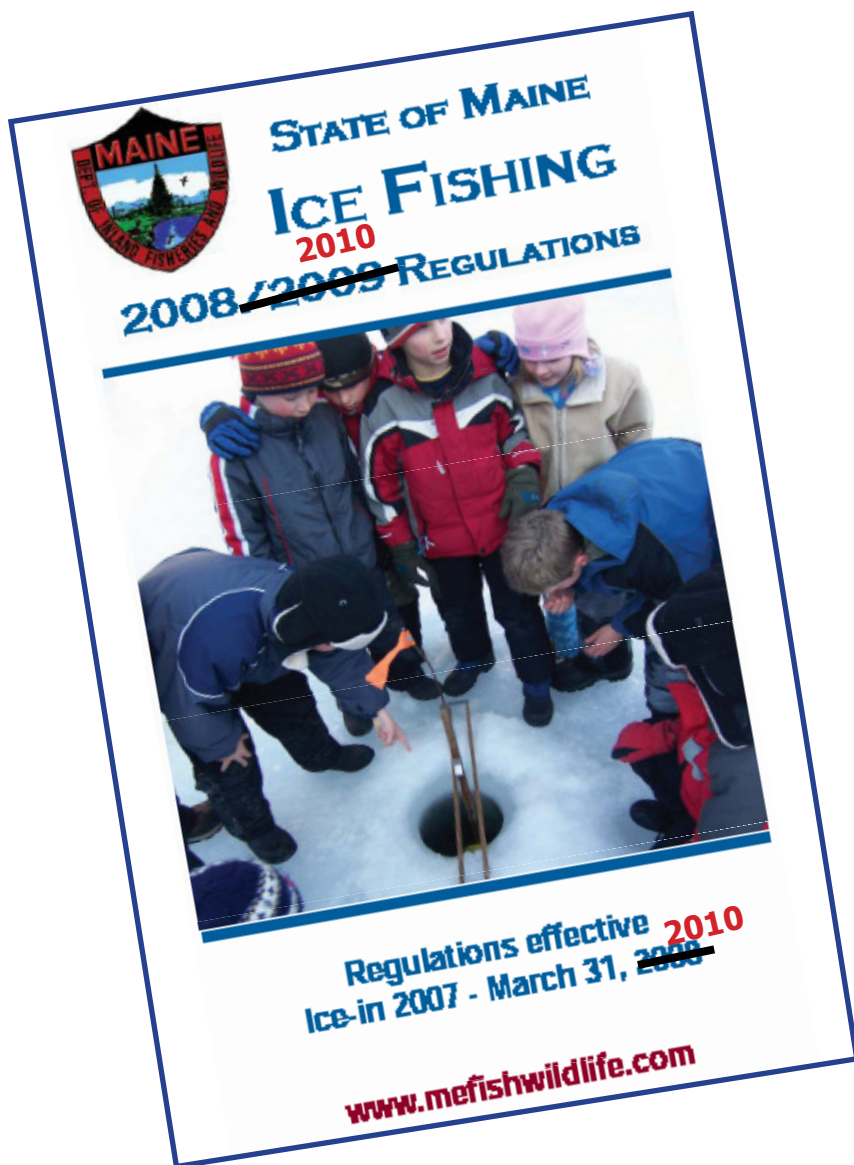


IF&W

2010 Ice Fishing Preview



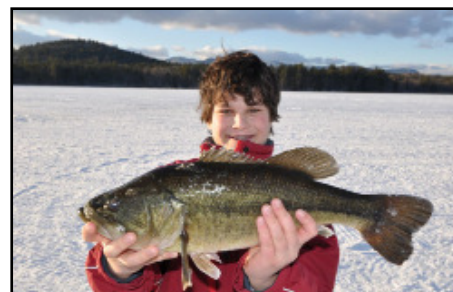
Dec.
23,
2009



THIS ONE'S STILL THE ONE!

The regulations in last season's Ice Fishing Law Book, shown above, are in effect this year and through March 31, 2010.

Inside



Southwestern Maine

Excellent fall fishing precursor of great ice fishing season

Central Maine

Winter fishing opportunities bountiful thanks to IF&W stocking program

Downeast

Landlocked salmon waters among biologists' recommendations

Western Mountains

Nearly 15,000 catchable-size brook trout stocked for winter anglers

Moosehead Lake

Bag limits eased on lake trout less than 18 inches for another year

Penobscot

Perch Pond not a typical brook trout water, so try it!

Aroostook County

Brook trout, splake stockings ready for winter anglers

Region A



IF&W 2010 Ice Fishing Preview

SOUTHWESTERN MAINE

By Francis Brautigam
Regional Fisheries Biologist
Gray

If late fall fishing is any indication, the ice fishing in southern Maine is expected to be very good this year.

Late fall fishing reports were excellent from anglers who fished through the extended open water season. Also, in recent years, fall stocked "catchable trout" have created expanded brook trout ice fishing and harvest opportunities for "hard water" anglers. In addition, stocking enhancements include a limited expansion of the rainbow trout stocking program, which has produced some outstanding fishing reports from open water anglers. This exciting new program is also popular with winter anglers, although rainbows are a little more difficult to catch through the ice.

Furthermore, winter anglers will benefit from an unusually high number of retired brook trout brood (averaging 1.2 to 3 pounds) that was stocked this fall. Winter anglers also will benefit from some exceptionally large lake trout (averaging 10 pounds) that were stocked as retired brood from Governor Hill Hatchery. Almost every year brood salmon, brown trout, and brook trout are retired from southern Maine hatcheries and stocked in select area waters.

Anglers seeking fast early-season action should consider fishing "Catchable Trout" waters stocked in the fall with 12- to 14-inch brook trout. Some of these waters include: Otter Ponds #2 and #4 (Standish), Barker Pond (Lyman), Worthley Pond (Poland), Crystal Lake (Gray), Sabbathday Lake

IF&W Tip

Anglers should review "Current Year Stocking Reports" on IF&W's web site, <http://www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing/reports/stocking/index.htm>, to see what has been stocked in their favorite waters.

(New Gloucester), Keoka Lake (Waterford), Bear Pond (Waterford), and Keewaydin Lake (Stoneham). Round Pond (Lyman) also is well stocked with catchable brook trout BUT is reserved exclusively for youth under the age of 16 during the winter.

Bear Pond (Waterford), Bryant Pond (Woodstock), and Trickey Pond will offer the best splake fishing prospects and are best fished early in the season.

The region's most promising lake trout prospects include Great East Lake (Acton), Sebago Lake (Naples), and Thompson Lake (Otisfield). In addition to these wild lake trout fisheries, lake trout averaging 10 pounds were stocked in Little Ossipee Lake (Waterford) and Mousam Lake (Acton).

Rainbow stocking programs recently were started on Stanley (Hiram), Norway Lake (Norway) and Little Ossipee Lake (Waterboro).

We've received very good reports from anglers fishing Norway and Little Ossipee Lake. Small baits and jigging methods are most productive when targeting winter "bows".

Salmon of above-average size may be found in a number of area lakes open to winter salmon fishing, including South Pond (Greenwood), Pleasant Pond (Casco), Kezar Lake (Lovell), Moose Pond (Bridgton). In addition, adult hatchery salmon brood were stocked in waters where smelt are insufficient to provide rapid salmon grow, including Little Ossipee Lake (Waterboro), Thomas Pond (Casco), Tripp Lake (Poland), Mousam Lake (Acton), Pennessewassee Lake (Norway), and Highland Lake (Windham).

There is no shortage of places to target brown trout, with approximately 35 area waters stocked. Many of the brown trout waters receive light fishing pressure and produce quality fish, although catch rates are generally much lower for browns than other trout or salmon.

For those who still like to open water fish throughout the winter, there are several year-round river fishing opportunities in the region, which have been enhanced under increased fall stocking programs. These waters include the entire Presumpscot River, the Saco River (particularly below Skelton Dam, Hiram Dam), the lower Royal River (below Elm Street), and the Mousam River (Springvale/Sanford). Open water trout fishing opportunities continue on stocked tidal rivers, including the Mousam (Kennebunk), the Ogunquit (Wells), and the Salmon Falls River (S. Berwick).

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For a complete list of stockings in 2009, visit www.mefishwildlife.com

Region B



IF&W 2010 Ice Fishing Preview

CENTRAL MAINE

By Robert Van Riper

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Sidney

As I write this, the thermometer outside my window reads a balmy 7 degrees. Even if the sun shines, a run of days with similar temperatures will find lakes and ponds in the mid-coastal area freezing up. For anglers with a bent towards ice fishing, the timing is right. As the waters solidify, many of these anglers will be turning their thoughts time spent on the ice.

The Mid-coastal region, which extends from the coast all the way to the Dexter area, has a diversity of winter fishing opportunities. As part of the Department's fall stocking program, 64 lakes and ponds are stocked annually with brook trout, 40 with brown trout, and 36 with both species. Rainbow trout are stocked in 3 waters.

There also are many waters where species, such as bass, white

perch and pickerel, can be targeted.

The list of waters of what can be caught where in the region is a long one. (Please consult your Ice Fishing regulations book.)

Some examples of brook trout waters are Minnehonk Lake in Mt. Vernon, Etna Pond, Etna, Pemaquid Pond, Damariscotta, Big Indian Pond, St. Albans, and Upper and Lower Narrows Ponds in Winthrop. For brown trout, try Androscoggin Lake in Wayne, Unity Pond, Unity, Alford Lake, Hope, Damariscotta Lake, Jefferson or Great Pond in Belgrade.

Anglers can pursue landlocked salmon in Parker Pond, Vienna (January only), Lake St. George, Liberty (January and February) and Swan Lake in Swanville (January and February). Lake George in Canaan has produced some very nice brookies and rainbows.

In addition to the salmonid species listed above, other fish species can be targeted at not only the wa-

ters described above, but at a myriad of smaller ponds, many of which are open early if safe ice is present.

Although we have been speaking of ice angling so far, our major rivers and some streams are open to open water fishing during the winter months. The Kennebec River from below Abenaki Dam in Madison to tide-water, the Nezinscot, Medomak and St. George rivers, Cobbossee Stream and lower Messalonskee Stream are examples of opportunities for anglers to wet a line. See the open water fishing regulations booklet for the rules on these particular waters.

As always, be sure to exercise caution whether going out on the ice or approaching a body of moving water. Early winter ice conditions are extremely variable and deserve your full attention with respect to safety. Be sure that ice is thick enough to support you and your gear or that access to open water is safe.

See you out there!



INLAND TRACKS

ADVENTURES ON THE WATER AND IN THE FIELD

<http://inlandtracks.wordpress.com>

Award-winning writer Travis Barrett, a public relations representative with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, shares insight, photographs and videos from his travels across Maine's outdoors.

(MOSTLY HIS TREKS WITH IF&W BIOLOGISTS AND SPECIALISTS)

Region C



IF&W 2010 Ice Fishing Preview

DOWNEAST

By Greg Burr

Assistant Regional Fisheries Biologist
Jonesboro

There are many exciting fishing opportunities in the Downeast region for the 2010 ice fishing season, least of which are the many fine landlocked salmon fisheries scattered throughout the area that biologists recommend. They include Cathance Lake in Cooper, West Grand Lake in Grand Lake Stream, Pocomcus Lake in T 6 ND, Long Pond in Southwest Harbor, Tunk Lake in T 10 SD and Phillips Lake in Dedham. Live capture netting this fall showed good salmon growth and numbers in all of these waters, which should equate to consistently good fishing in January and February.

In addition to these annually

stocked salmon waters, retired brood stock landlocked salmon, between the sizes of 2.5 and 3.5 pounds, were stocked late this fall from the Grand Lake Stream Hatchery. These larger salmon will create a buzz at the following waters where they were released: Pleasant River Lake in Beddington with 65 salmon, Mopang Lake in T 29 MD with 65 salmon, Nashes Lake in Calais with 25 salmon, and Lower Springy Pond in Otis with 25 salmon.

Anglers in eastern Maine will find terrific brook trout fishing at the following biologist-recommended waters: Second Mark's Lake in Marshfield, Billings Pond in Blue Hill, Echo Lake in Southwest Harbor, Lakewood Pond in Bar Harbor, Tilden Pond in T 10 SD and Rainbow Pond in T 10 SD.

In addition the following lakes and ponds were stocked with the larger fall yearling trout that ranged between 12 and 14 inches and will make for some fun action through the ice: Indian Lake in Whiting, Keenes Lake in Calais, Goulding Lake in Robbinston, Vining Lake in Cooper, Montegail Pond in T 19 MD, Craig Pond in Orland, Jacob-Buck Pond in Bucksport, Bubble Pond in Bar Harbor, Eagle Lake in Bar Harbor, Lower Hadlock Pond in Northeast Harbor and Round Pond in Somesville. Indian Lake in Whiting and Keenes Lake in Calais were stocked with 50 large retired brood stock brook trout ranging in size between 2 and 3 pounds.

All of these waters hold exciting possibilities for some wonderful outdoor memories. Good luck to all!

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Region D



IF&W 2010 Ice Fishing Preview

WESTERN MOUNTAINS

By Dave Boucher

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Strong

With nearly 15,000 catchable-size brook trout stocked specifically for winter anglers, the 2010 ice fishing season in western Maine should start with a splash. These attractive 12- to 15-inch fish were scattered in lakes throughout the region, so it shouldn't be difficult to find some close to home.

The waters include Ellis (Roxbury) Pond in Roxbury, Crowell and Norcross Ponds in Chesterville, Webb Lake in Weld, Wilson Lake in Wilton, Porter Lake in New Vineyard, Wentworth and Baker Ponds in Solon, Smith Pond in Brighton, Wesserunsett Lake in Madison, Chain of Ponds in Chain of Ponds Twp., and Spring Lake in T3 R4. Baker, Smith, Webb, and Wesserunsett also received fall yearling brown trout that averaged 12-14 inches in length. As a bonus, Wilson

Lake in Wilton was the recipient of 60 large togue; these retired brood fish weigh about 10 pounds apiece!

Winter anglers also love splake, and these will be available in Wentworth Pond, Lufkin Pond in Phillips, and Wyman Lake in Moscow.

So let the games begin, but as usual, please use common sense when traveling on the ice during the early part of the season, especially on the larger lakes that take a bit longer to freeze well.

Region E



IF&W 2010 Ice Fishing Preview

MOOSEHEAD LAKE

By Tim Obrey

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Greenville

The cold weather has finally arrived and the smaller ponds in the Moosehead Lake Region are starting to button up for the winter. As I write this report on Dec. 17, Moosehead Lake still is wide open and we will need a few calm, cold nights for the big lake to freeze over. Anglers should be cautious this time of year -- no fish is worth a cold dip in a lake in the winter.

Anglers looking for a place to fish early in the season could try Big Wood Pond in Jackman. Big Wood

Pond is usually at its best in early January and it is one of first ponds to have good ice. This pond is stocked in the fall with 12- to 14-inch splake, and it also received a number of retired brook trout brood fish this year.

Mountain View Pond and Prong Ponds also are early season favorites in the Greenville area. These waters generally have good ice early and are stocked regularly. These ponds are open as soon as ice forms, so you can try out your new gear from Christmas before the New Year.

In 2007, we liberalized the bag limits on lake trout on Moosehead Lake in an effort to reduce the overabundant population. We have been

very successful. We still are encouraging the harvest of lake trout less than 18 inches for one more winter. New regulations will go into effect in April 2010, including a reduction in the bag limit for lake trout over 18 inches from two fish to one fish. We had hoped to have this regulation in effect for this winter. However, because we are developing a new two-year law book that includes both summer and winter rules, it was logistically not possible. Therefore, we are asking anglers to voluntarily consider keeping just one lake trout over 18 inches from Moosehead Lake this winter and help protect some of the quality fish.

SAFETY FIRST!

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For a complete list of stockings in 2009, visit www.mefishwildlife.com

Region F



IF&W 2010 Ice Fishing Preview

PENOBSCOT

By Richard Dill

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Enfield

Fall Yearling Brook Trout

Once again, ice anglers should be excited to hear that this past fall more than 10,000 fall yearling-age brook trout were stocked in 14 of the region's waters. The fall yearling trout program has proven to be very popular, as these fish average about 1 pound each and generally provide fast fishing action, especially early in the season.

One particular water worth mentioning this year is Perch Pond (formerly Mud Pond) located in Old Town (Maine Delorme, Map 33, E-2), which was stocked for the first time ever with nearly 600 fall yearling

brook trout and a few retired adult brood fish. No doubt, Perch Pond does not fit the typical mold of a Maine brook trout water. It is quite shallow and has an abundance of warm water species of fish including pickerel, perch and bass. So why bother to stock it with trout, you may ask? What Perch Pond does offer is easy access to the pond via Sewall Park, which is plowed regularly by the Town of Old Town throughout the winter, and is in close proximity to a densely populated part of the region, making it an ideal location for a put-and-take brook trout fishery for anglers of all ages.

This is an experimental program, with future stockings hinged on angler interest and of course angler success.

"Kids Only" Ponds

Kids 15 years old and younger have several opportunities in Region F to be the star of the show, with some assistance from mom and dad when needed, of course. Pickerel Pond, located at the Maine Youth Fish and Game Club beside the Stud Mill Road near Milford, Little Round Pond in Lincoln, Jerry Pond in Millinocket, Rock Crusher Pond in Island Falls, and Harris Pond in Milo are all "kids only" ponds that the Department stocks several times throughout the year with brook trout.

In fact, all of these ponds last fall received supplemental stockings of fall yearling brook trout ranging from 10 to 14 inches long, as well as retired brood stock ranging from 14 to 18 inches long.

Region G



IF&W 2010 Ice Fishing Preview

AROOSTOOK COUNTY

By Dave Basley

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Ashland

The recent deep freeze will assist the freeze up of area waters for the upcoming ice fishing season. Larger, deeper lakes will warrant considerable caution for the January 1 opening in spite of the cold weather. Smaller lakes might be the safest bet for family fishing on opening weekend.

An ample supply of 12- to 14-inch brook trout have been stocked in Arnold Brook Lake in Presque Isle, Cochrane Lake in Linneus, Spaulding Lake in Oakfield, Nickerson Lake in New Limerick and Umcolcus Lake in T7R5 WELS just west of Rt. 11. Nickerson and Arnold Brook Lake also received a number of 16- to 18-inch trout that were retired from our brood fish program.

Splake, very popular with our

winter anglers, were stocked this fall in Drew's Lake in Linneus and Squa Pan Lake in Masardis. These 12- to 14-inch fish will afford great action in these two waters.

Round up the gear, buy some hot dogs and head for the lake – there won't be any black flies.

Have a safe and enjoyable fishing season and maybe we'll see you on the ice!

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IF&W 2010 Ice Fishing Preview

RESEARCH

Continuation of IFW's Catchable Trout Study

By Jason Seiders

Research Fisheries Biologist
Bangor

Fisheries biologists from the Gray, Sidney, and Bangor offices will be conducting angler surveys on several stocked brook trout waters in central and southern Maine during the first four weeks of the 2010 ice fishing season. This is a continuation of our Catchable Trout Study, which focuses on improving angler success in stocked waters. The lakes and ponds included in the study are stocked with fall yearling brook trout and are listed below.

McGrath Pond (Oakland), Nequasset Lake (Woolwich), Biscay Pond (Bremen), Cochnewagon Pond (Monmouth), Crystal Pond (Gray), Sabbathday Lake (New Gloucester), Flying Pond (Vienna), Salmon Pond (also known as Ellis Pond) (Oakland),

Keewaydin Lake (Stoneham), Wilson Pond (Wayne), Keoka Lake (Waterford), Otter Pond #2 (Standish)

Biologists have interviewed thousands of anglers on these study waters during the previous two ice fishing seasons, compiling a huge amount of valuable information about the fishing opportunities that each water offers. Studies during the previous years have shown a wide variety of success rates for ice anglers seeking fall-stocked brook trout. When comparing the number of trout stocked in a particular water to the number of trout caught from that same water, success rates have varied from 1 percent to nearly 50 percent! This winter, anglers can do their best to catch their share of over 7,300 brook trout that were stocked throughout the study waters listed above.

Ice anglers seeking brook trout

in central and southern Maine will most likely be fishing lakes and ponds that are stocked in the fall with 10-14 inch trout by IFW's Hatchery Division. IFW's goal is to provide trout fishing opportunities in waters that do not sustain year round brook trout fisheries for a variety of reasons such as: lack of suitable cold-water habitat in summer, competing fish species, or no brook trout spawning habitat. That said, in addition to the stocked brook trout many of these waters offer a variety of species that can make a great day of fishing such as brown trout, smallmouth and largemouth bass, white perch, and pickerel.

This will be the final winter assessment of the Catchable Trout Program. With the assistance of numerous ice anglers we hope to gain a better understanding of where catchable trout perform best and how to maximize angling success.

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